

Bagpipes and Cider

By A. ARCHER-LOCK *

1978. The year of the cloud! We passed through Tummel Bridge on July 20th where, in spite of a strange combined mixture of drizzle in sunshine, many Dark Green Fritillaries (*Argynnis aglaia*) were on the wing, with one pair in cop, and a very fesh ♂ Scotch Argus (*Erebia aethiops*). The morning of the 21st was kind on Ben Lawers, the sunny intervals threatening to cease however, so I climbed fifteen hundred feet a good deal faster than nature intended, to see several worn Mountain Ringlets (*Erebia epiphron*) of both sexes. On returning to the car park, the family pointed to a dark little butterfly — a ♂ Mountain Ringlet of course!

July 22nd at Lochearnhead was torrential, washing out most of the Highland Games, and any butterfly prospects too. We were surprised to hear the most enchanting pibroch wafted to our ears through the downpour (rain can ruin bagpipes) — but the soul wrenching notes were tracked down to the public conveniences. Such engaging music.

A generous friend had confided the location of a site in the Aviemore area which turned out to be one of nature's secret flower gardens, overshadowed by the great snow patched hills of the Cairngorms. In spite of the deluging leaden skies during the morning of July 26th, my permanent manageress, fully intuitive, suggested a visit that afternoon — the skies cleared on arrival! Within an hour, a pair of relatively fresh Artaxerxes, and a worn pair of Small Blues (*Cupido minimus*) had been seen, both ♀'s laying, as were Common Blues (*Polyommatus icarus*) and Dark Green Fritillaries. Twelve (and probably thirteen) species were seen, including the largest Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) I have ever seen — unfortunately it was not polychloros!

Well before the end of the month, the ♂ Scotch Argus was abundant and confused, for the first ♀ was not seen until July 31st, in a pine clearing of bracken fronds, serenaded by chipping crossbills and scolding crested tits. Large Heaths (*Coenonympha tullia*) on a spey valley moss overlooked by a famous blackcock lekking knoll, were well past their best.

For the South West it was a strange year, and yet produced a sighting once more, of a different species for each calendar month. At a communal colony of High Brown (*Argynnis cydippe*) and Dark Green Fritillaries, normally emerging almost together, the first of the former was seen on July 14th, twenty-six days after *aglaia*.

The first fresh ♂ Brown Hairstreak (*Thecla betulae*) was seen on August 24th and the first ♀ on the 29th, the former having become so addicted to Hemp Agrimony, that he failed to notice her basking in full view a yard away! A ♀ Grayling (*Eumenis semele*) came over the high forest one day to settle briefly in the lush little meadow; a brief bask, and she was on her way southwards — presumably a case of long distance dispersal.

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The fine autumn produced quite a spate of coastal Painted Ladies (*Vanessa cardui*), and Red Admiral numbers came up to normal, two being seen in December. Also a Peacock (*Nymphalis io*) was watched on December 9th, obviously enjoying life, for she spent the sunny middle day of gale force wind alternately basking on an old chapel wall, and then deliberately flying up to ridge height for a battle with the elements, before dropping to bask. This she did repeatedly, before returning(?) through the broken lattice window, once more to hibernate.

Strangest of all, in this same rough grassed city cemetery on October 4th I saw a Marbled White (*Melanargia galathea*), far from any known colony. I had to rub my eyes! Presumably a late emerged wanderer, justifiably looking perplexed when on the wing. Finally, may I gratefully thank those who so kindly advised me about life north of the border.

OBITUARY

Cecil Ralph Haxby, F.R.E.S.

The death of Cecil Haxby on the 17th December 1978 at the age of 66, he having been born on the 6th July 1913, came as a great shock to his many friends. Cecil had only retired in July 1978, and was looking forward to frequent visits to us in Hampshire where he had made many friends over the past 30 years. Indeed, most of his entomological activities both in the field and socially took place in the New Forest, where for many years we welcomed him as our special guest.

The son of the late Fred Haxby who was a prominent member of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, Cecil followed in his father's footsteps. He was for many years a member of the Lepidoptera Committee of that body, a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society and a well-known and popular member of the British Entomological and Natural History Society to which he attended most of its Annual Dinners and Exhibitions. He was also a past President of the Bradford Naturalists' Society and assisted in the preparation of the Yorkshire List of Macrolepidoptera published in *The Naturalist* from 1967 to 1970.

Cecil Haxby served with the R.A.F. Signals during the war, mostly in South Africa and the Middle East, but acquired a good knowledge of the New Forest while stationed at Holmsley. He was also a gifted organist.

His immaculate and well set collection of lepidoptera has been accepted by Bradford Museum at Cliffe Castle, Keighley, but during our long friendship, Cecil gave us all his aberrations and these are now incorporated with ours as part of the National Collection. Among the most interesting he gave us are a female somatic mosaic *Laothoe populi* L. pink one side and pale on the other, and the gynandromorph of *Erebia aethiops* Esp. illustrated in Russwurm's *Aberrations of British Butterflies*, plate 34 figs. 15 and 16.

We have all lost a sincere friend.

R.W.W.